

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-6, 8-12 and 14-19 remain pending in this application. Claim 2 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 3 and 7 have been previously canceled. Claims 10-12 and 14-16 have been withdrawn from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention.

Claims 4 and 8 have been amended to delete reference to canceled claim 2. Claim 9 has been amended to indicate the silicone compound is a developer as suggested by the Examiner. Finally, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the language of canceled claim 2 and to restrict the reactive functional groups that modify the claimed silicone compound. Accordingly, no new matter has been introduced by these amendments.

Claim 9 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 9 has been amended as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9 and 17-19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujii (US2002/0182543 A1) in view of Suzuki et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,532,116). Fujii is said to teach a method according to the claimed invention wherein a photopolymer plate is subjected to the sequence of steps of exposure, development, post-exposure, including a contact step that may contain a silicone mixture. The Examiner incorrectly argues that photosensitive resin composition F-320 made by Asahi Kasei Corp. (see paragraphs 0076, 0080 and 0085) is the same or falls within the scope of original claim 2 (now recited in claim 1). There is no indication that

F-320 contains a hydrophobic polymer in addition to the polar group containing polymer as now recited in claim 1. Those claims are distinguished from the teachings of Fujii for at least this reason and should be regarded as patentable over the applied prior art. Suzuki et al. does not address the combination of polymers used in the photopolymer.

The Examiner has recognized that Fujii does not disclose that the contact step brings the photopolymer into contact with a liquid comprising a silicone compound with a reactive functional group, but relies on Suzuki et al. as teaching an alkaline developing solution that may comprise a silicone compound modified with an alkoxy functional group. Specifically, Suzuki et al. teaches that the developing solution may contain polydialkoxysiloxane as an anti-foaming agent. Neither original claim 1 nor amended claim 1 includes "alkoxy" as a functional group that falls within the scope of permissible reactive functional groups that fall within the scope of claim 1. Accordingly, since neither Fujii nor Suzuki et al., alone or in combination, teach the recited silicone compound or the recited ingredients of the photopolymer, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 17 and 19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoshida (US 6,403,284) in view of Suzuki et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,532,116). In addition to the arguments presented above with respect to the teachings of Suzuki et al., this rejection was not applied to claim 2 because the Examiner apparently recognized that Yoshida did not teach or suggest the ingredients recited in claim 2 (now claim 1) for the photopolymer. As these claims now depend, either directly or indirectly, on claim 1, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Prompt and favorable reconsideration is requested.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to Deposit Account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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